Excellent Building Materials, Whitton, near Hounslow and Twickenham.

MR. M. ADAMS will SELL by AUCTION, on the Premises, on Tuesday, March 4, and following day, at Eleven precisely, on account of the number of lots, the whole of the valuable MATERIALS of a MANSION, known as Whitton Dean House, formerly the residence of Colonel Campbell; comprising 350,000 malm, stock, and grizzled bricks, thirteen tons of lead, twelve squares of slating, 2,000 feet of York and Portland paving, 10,000 glazed pantiles, stone staircases, stone steps and entrances, strings, copings, marble chimney-pieces and slabs, glazed sashes and frames with plate-glass, moulded and carved doors, oak and deal floor boards, girders, joists, and all the internal fittings, register stoves, two water-closets, large lead cistern, force-pump, the handsome fittings up of a dairy with mahogany shelves, and lined throughout with about 1,500 Dutch tiles, dressers, shelves, lead pumps, coppers, and the whole of the useful materials. Whitton is only one mile and a half from the Thames, from whence the great advantage of water-carriage must render the above materials peculiarly deserving of attention. Catalogues (3d. each) may be had on the premises; at the George and Bell Inns, Hounslow; the King's Head Inn, Twickenham; the Northumberland Arms, Chequers, and George Inns, Isleworth; the White Hart and Red Lion, Whitton; and of the auctioneer, Mr. M. Adams, Isleworth, and 29, Hart-street, Bloomsbury. Note.—No person will be admitted on the premises without a Catalogue.

The Builder.

No. CVIII.

SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1845.

AN examination of the very interesting example of ironwork at Chelsea Hospital, represented by the accompanying engraving (p. 102), leads us to express regret that art is now so seldom employed on this material, and that in the modern manufacture of works in iron right principles are not pursued. It is a blot upon the age, that modern art has done so little in a material with which modern science has done so much. Cast iron has taken the place of wrought, and in many respects offers considerable facilities, and might be very advantageously and effectively used in architecture if it were applied in accordance with true principles, *in forms adapted to the material*. Ironwork should look like ironwork, and stone should shew itself to be stone. An ancient iron railing has a beauty of its own, quite distinct from the beauty of a stone balustrade; but we unfortunately seldom use iron in any other way than as an imitation of some other material.

To apply iron in construction properly, very different proportions should be used from what would be necessary for stone, and these would lead to new combinations, and ultimately to a new style of architecture. We have the means in our hands to produce very extraordinary effects, but as yet we don't know how to use them efficiently.

What we are now about to say, however, relates chiefly to iron applied decoratively, not structurally. In ancient works, such as hinges, locks, bolts, rivets, railings, or screens, the greatest ingenuity to produce beauty, in addition to skill to render the work sound and fit for its purpose, is apparent. You see that the man was an *artist* as well as a smith, that he understood the material on which he was working, and knew how an effect was to be obtained by it. The beauty of the foliage in some works of the 16th century formed out of thin iron plates, simply twisted up by a tool, is marvellous. Tracery was produced by plates differently pierced, laid one over the other, without any attempt at disguise, and flat bars were rivetted together, and made ornamental by the very rivets. These men, as we said before, were artists as well as smiths: one of them, indeed, Quentin Matsys, shewed himself so to the world in another material; but his reputation as the worker of the iron screen of King Edward the Fourth's tomb in St. George's Chapel, at Windsor, is as great as it is for his well-known picture of the Misers, at Windsor Castle.

That extraordinary piece of ironwork is now under repair at Messrs. Bramah's, and must be considered one of the finest specimens in the country, presenting paneling and tracery, crockets, finials, and minute ornaments, wrought in the most perfect and artistical manner. Inquiring of one of the firm whether he would be able to produce a similar work, his reply was, "Certainly; but not *by contract*, or under limitation of time:" and these, there is no doubt, are the great bars against the improvement of our own mechanics and artizans. The master cannot afford to develope a man's ability; what he is obliged to seek for is, the greatest quantity of work in the smallest space of time: excellent work won't do; work that will pass is all that he can hope to give. And the result, as might have been expected, is a lamentable decline in many of the constructive arts.

To return to the ironwork by Matsys;—it is to be regretted, that in the repairs now making, *cast* iron is partially employed, probably on the ground of expense. In a work of this sort, however, expense should not be considered; and if the screen be restored at all, it should be restored in the most perfect manner possible. The cast portions, notwithstanding the able hands to which the work is confided, contrasts very badly with that which is wrought, having none of the sharpness and vigour which distinguishes the original. In saying this we do not wish to attach the slightest discredit to the workmanship,—the defect is a consequence of the material; it is to the use of this we object; and we hope, as there is still much to be restored, that the remainder will be executed as nearly like the original as possible, and this can only be done with *wrought* iron.

Another fine work by Matsys is to be seen at Antwerp, near the Cathedral. It is a sort of cage over a well, and displays great skill.

Formerly, there were many admirable examples of ancient ironwork around the tombs in Westminster Abbey; but, about the year 1820, they were taken down and sold as old iron to one Samuel Tansley. Some stir was made in the House of Commons at the time, and part of the railings from Henry the Fifth's tomb was sent back; but all the other railings were lost irretrievably. The ironwork from Queen Eleanor's tomb was very beautiful, and included eleven divisions of scroll-like foliage, all varying in design. The screen round Henry the Seventh's tomb in the Abbey, which still remains, is a fine specimen, and shews fully the principle which the ancient workers in metal pursued.

DOINGS OF THE OFFICIAL REFEREES.

WE mentioned some time ago, amongst other matters connected with the new Buildings Act, that the surveyor of the Greenwich district had laid before the official referees, a complaint against the owner of a certain house for an alleged illegal projection of a shop-front, and cellar-flap and way, but that as he had omitted to state all the grounds and particulars of his objection, and the parts of the new Act to which the said works were not conformable, its consideration was deferred, in order that he might do so. Since then, the matter has been formally investigated and decided; and, as the award in this case determines one question which has been submitted to us on several occasions, we will briefly state the admissions on both sides, and the referees' decision.

The surveyor's objections to the shop-front were, that the end adjoining the neighbouring house was not formed of fire-proof materials: that it was a new structure, having been put up since the 1st of January, and extended over part of the front where no projection existed before: that the projection of part of the shop-front, not being the cornice, was sixteen inches, which was contrary to the statute. The objection to the cellar-flap was, that it was not formerly adjoining to the passage-way; that the alteration brought it within the meaning of the Act, and therefore it was unlawfully placed, projecting, as it did before, the front into the street or public way.

The owner's reply was, that the shop front had not been disturbed, merely the windows; that it did not extend over any other part now than it did before, and that the alterations both of the front and the cellar-flap were commenced before the 1st of January. At the hearing before the referees (not insisted on by them, it is as well to state, but required by the owner) the surveyor admitted the *commencement* of works before the 1st, but urged that each alteration was a distinct feature: also that the old entablature remained, and did not extend over any other part now than it always did.

The owner admitted that the *refacing* was begun after 1st January; that the oblong and circular portions of the front were removed before the 1st; that the new structure extended over parts of the front, where no portion but the entablature existed before; and that the *formation* of the cellar-flap and way had not commenced before the 1st of January.

The decision of the official referees was, that the alterations, so far as related to the projection of the shop-front and of the cellar-flap, were within the statute, and ought to have been executed according to its provisions; that these provisions had not been attended to; that the shop-front, so far as it had been made by the alterations to project into the street (in parts not being the cornice), more than 10 inches* from the face of the wall to which it is annexed, should be pulled down, and that the cellar-flaps should not be made to encroach upon any part of the public way.

We have received two or three letters complaining of the refusal, on the part of the referees, to give any information without a "case" and a fee, and of the time occupied in making their award, whereby builders are injured. One correspondent, who signs himself "Censor," further says—

"Sir,—Have you had occasion to make any application to the official referees or registrar in Trafalgar-square? If so, have you ever *seen* them?

"From my own experience, I suspect they wish to make themselves as inaccessible as eastern potentates; petitions or representations must be submitted before the oracular response can be obtained. Nothing can be done without written applications (the fees for which are, of course, carefully registered and charged, or a notice sent you, that unless the fee is paid, they will not be laid before the officials), or else you are referred to the clerk, who can, of course, settle or do nothing, except book the charge for the interview.

"On calling in Trafalgar-square, you are always met with the reply 'The registrar or referees are engaged with the board.' Can you tell me who, and what is 'the board?' as I can find no allusion to it in 'the Act.'

"I hope the three gentlemen appointed to carry the Act into effect will not require all the formularies of a master in chancery's office, or we should have been enabled to get disputed points settled under the old Act quicker by going to law, *then* under the present one. It was anticipated that the reverse would have been the case.

"There is no want of courtesy in words, but I apprehend the present feeling of the profession is that 'the board' are not giving the facilities for carrying on building works which they expected to obtain from the supervision of professional gentlemen.

"I hope we shall not find registrar's law as troublesome as the old magistrates' law."

* The street is above 50 feet wide.